

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 KUWAIT 002522

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO PASS USAID/W  
STATE PLEASE REPEAT TO IO COLLECTIVE  
STATE FOR PRM/ANE, EUR/SE, NEA/NGA, IO AND SA/PAB  
NSC FOR EABRAMS, SMCCORMICK, STAHIR-KHELI, JDWORKEN  
USAID FOR USAID/A, DCHA/AA, DCHA/RMT, DCHA/FFP  
USAID FOR DCHA/OTI, DCHA/DG, ANE/AA  
USAID FOR DCHA/OFDA:WGARVELINK, BMCCONNELL, KFARNSWORTH  
USAID FOR ANE/AA:WCHAMBERLIN  
ROME FOR FODAG  
GENEVA FOR RMA AND NKYLOH  
ANKARA FOR AMB WRPEARSON, ECON AJSIROTIC AND DART  
AMMAN FOR USAID AND DART

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [IZ](#) [WFP](#)

SUBJECT: DART UPDATE ON AL MUTHANNA

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

-----  
SUMMARY  
-----

1. (U) Health, security, water, and electricity conditions have improved in Samawah, Al Muthanna Governorate since the DART's last visit on 15 May, according to the deputy governor. He said unemployment was now the largest problem. The DART also visited with WFP, ACTED, and with CMOC staff. WFP said it expected a relatively smooth June food distribution in the Al Muthanna and Al Qadisiyah Governorates. End Summary.

-----  
AL AL MUTHANNA, AL QADISIYAH FOOD DISTRIBUTION UPDATES  
-----

2. (U) The DART met with U.N. World Food Program (WFP) staff in Samawah on 31 May to discuss the planned 1 June start date for the public distribution system (PDS). According to WFP, the Al Muthanna Governorate was prepared to begin distributions and there were no major issues affecting the PDS.

3. (U) Flour distributions will begin on 1 June, followed by food commodity distributions on 2 June. The civil-military operations center (CMOC) will deploy additional security patrols and will station teams at the distribution points to assist the Ministry of Trade (MOT) security personnel. WFP mentioned that contracted workers were asking for an increase in salaries, posing a problem for off-loading trucks during distributions.

4. (U) All MOT offices were functioning, and the DART witnessed the Ration Card Center (RCC) registering new beneficiaries. As of 29 May, the grain silo had received 3,194 metric tons (MT) of wheat grain with additional deliveries due on 31 May. It had an additional storage capacity of approximately 7,000 MT. WFP said an unknown quantity of lentils was expected on 31 May, but WFP was unsure if the deliveries planned for June would allow for a complete ration for all beneficiaries. Milling is ongoing without any reported problems.

5. (U) WFP reported difficulty in working with the MOT warehouse manager, particularly in identifying warehouse space for PDS commodities. WFP staff stated that despite what it viewed as counterproductive management decisions by the warehouse manager, they would continue to work around the problem to avoid disruptions in June's distribution.

6. (U) Management issues were also a concern in Ad Diwaniyah Governorate. MOT management changes at the warehouse and the Grain Board were delaying the disbursement of emergency-payment funds to MOT employees and slowing the release of operating funds for necessary start-up costs and repairs.

7. (U) Staff at MOT facilities reported they were receiving some operating supplies from Baghdad, but needed funds for fuel, furniture, payment of contracts, chemicals, and grain testing and office supplies.

8. (U) According to the Ration Center Manager, the Ration Center has begun to serve beneficiaries and will register new arrivals from outside Iraq, as well as new arrivals from other governorates and those with lost or stolen identification or ration cards. As of 29 May, the Ration Center has issued new ration cards for 15 families.

-----  
OTHER AL QADISIYAH UPDATES  
-----

-----  
-- CMOC has assisted in obtaining two air conditioners for the WFP and MOT offices at the warehouse and work has begun on installation.

-- According to CMOC/Ad Diwaniyah, the flour distribution in Al Qadisiyah has begun and planned food distributions will begin the week of 1 Jun.

-- Coalition forces have begun initial assessments of the repair requirements at MOT facilities. CMOC has informed the DART that repair projects will be developed for the Grain Board and the warehouse.

-- WFP and MOT offices in Al Qadisiyah, Karbala, An Najaf, Al Muthanna, and Babil have not yet received instructions for the local purchase of grains.

-- The DART has seen fake PDS item lists in Al Hillah and Samawah that are reportedly being sold on the local market for 250 dinars. The DART assumes this may cause some confusion during June's distribution.

-----  
IMPROVING PROTECTION ISSUES  
-----

19. (U) The DART met on 31 May with the Deputy Governor of Al Muthanna and with the CMOC director. Both indicated protection issues in town have improved since the DART's first visit to Samawah two weeks ago. Coalition forces have begun training programs for a new Iraqi police force, thereby increasing the number of police on the streets and improving their basic policing procedures. Community members have also gotten together and set up a neighborhood watch for many of the districts in town. The deputy mayor is very happy with the support the community has received from Coalition forces on this matter. The justice system is showing improved operations as well. Police are properly arresting offenders, writing arrest reports, keeping track of evidence, and beginning to send cases to trial. Judges have been vetted and the courthouse is being repaired with Department of Defense ODHACA funds.

10. (U) In terms of reprisals, CMOC reported that there have not been any obvious cases of reprisals in Samawa. People tend to either go to Coalition forces or the authorities before taking matters into their own hands. Communities are well organized and come bearing petitions that request Coalition forces to investigate someone accused of corrupt dealings during the former regime. However, there continues to be petty theft and incidents of looting, as well as tribal tensions.

11. (U) According to the CMOC, there are three small mass graves near Samawa and one larger one between Samawa and Al Saman. A Kuwaiti forensics team has traveled to that site to identify possible Kuwaiti citizens who were thought to be buried there. The criminal investigation division is also becoming involved in the mass graves issues around town.

-----  
POTENTIAL REFUGEE RETURNS  
-----

12. (SBU) There have been recent reports that approximately 5,200 refugees in Rafha refugee camp in Saudi Arabia will be voluntarily repatriated to Basra and Samawa in the next couple of weeks. In preparation for possible repatriations to Samawa, the DART discussed refugee repatriation issues with the deputy governor, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), WFP, and the CMOC. According to the deputy governor, there are between 650,000 to 700,000 people in Al Muthanna Governorate. When asked if refugees would be easily accepted back into the community, he seemed supportive of returning Iraqis who had either been expatriates (he was an expatriate himself) or refugees, as long as they brought skills with them that could help Samawa build up and continue to develop. (Note: this answer is generally shared by Iraqis when asked this same question. End Note.)

13. (U) On food rations, it seems as long as refugees have an identity card that identifies them as returned Iraqi citizens, they are able to register with the governorate's ration center for a ration card. Overall, it appears most of the sectors are up and running in the city, including water, electricity, security, food, and health. While many of the urban sectors in Samawa are functioning at pre-war levels, many rural areas continue to lack proper electricity, security, health, and water and sanitation. Therefore, it is critical to know the makeup of these returning refugees, such as the number of extremely vulnerable individuals, and the percentage of rural versus urban dwellers.

-----  
IMPROVING CONDITIONS IN AL MUTHANNA  
-----

14. (U) Since the DART last visited Samawah on 15 May, conditions have markedly improved, according to Al Muthanna's Deputy Governor. "You can ask people if you want to confirm," he said. In rural areas, 18 additional tankers have begun to distribute water, and in Samawah, power supply has increased to 50 megawatts (MW) from 10 MW following a "deal" the governor made with Samawah's source of power, An Nasariyah. The Deputy Governor said the governorate requires 75 megawatts.

15. (U) In health, the pediatric hospital recently installed or improved its air conditioning system, and the Coalition troops began providing better security at health facilities, according to the Deputy Governor. One week ago, GOAL delivered a shipment of DART-funded drugs to the Ministry of Health. On food, the Deputy Governor said residents had two to three months of food rations stored in their homes.

16. (U) Problems remaining included "individual" security problems regarding thieves, and joblessness, especially among teenagers, according to the Deputy Governor. He said youths were increasingly turning to drugs, particularly pharmaceuticals, such as Valium. He also said that job prospects would improve once a central government in Baghdad was established.

17. (U) The city council, selected by tribes and political parties, has ballooned to 60 members, none of whom are women. The Deputy Governor said the Coalition would like that number reduced to 25 with members having sectoral expertise. He said residents would welcome women on the council and said that many women served in the municipal government. He suggested elections would take place upon the establishment of a central government.

18. (U) The DART visited with ACTED on 31 May, a French agency that has been active in Al Muthanna since late April. ACTED hopes to work on rural water and sanitation, and health activities in Al Muthanna, a governorate with one of the highest rural populations. It is also interested in the agriculture sector. ACTED calls water the greatest problem in rural Al Muthanna with many people drinking water straight from canals. Most compact water units are not functioning, according to ACTED. It proposes repairing or replacing water units, and improving the water-tanker distribution system. ACTED has office space at the water treatment center, and will work on monitoring the water system with the water department. ACTED called Al Muthanna's wheat yield among the lowest in the world. "Wheat is a disaster," it said. ACTED blamed the problem on the intrusion of salty water, bad seeds, and possibly a lack of proper fertilizers.

19. (U) The DART met with CMOC director and other CMOC representatives on 31 May in Samawah who confirmed the deputy governor's belief that the health sector had improved. According to the CMOC director, there are currently no major health concerns, however oxygen is scarce and expensive.

20. (U) The director also said that general fuel supplies were low and that prospects of replenishment were unclear. He said twenty tons of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) came into Samawah each of the last two days, providing 1,100 families with one bottle each. Samawah has an estimated 150,000 people. The director also said that 24 tankers of benzene arrived last week, temporarily meeting benzene needs. Diesel fuel remained in short supply. According to the director, the electrical supply should improve by late June when a third generator in An Nasariyah, Samawah's power source, goes into operation.

JONES